

## **William MacRea to Andrew Jackson, September 9, 1814, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.**

### **LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WILLIAM MACREA TO JACKSON.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel MacRea was in command in New Orleans from the resignation of Brigadier-General Flournoy, in the summer of 1814, to the arrival of Jackson, Dec. 1, 1814.

New Orleans, September 9, 1814.

*Sir*, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30 Ult<sup>o</sup>, by Capt. Wirt, and have communicated your orders accordingly. The last order preventing the passing of Vessels through the Lakes laden with provisions, has caused considerable agitation, as it prevented several from sailing to Mobile.

In your letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> you direct me to put the Fortifications at New Orleans and its vicinity in the best possible state of defence. There is now mounted at Fort St. Philip,<sup>2</sup> Twenty eight, twenty four pounders, besides some brass pieces, all of which were in good order for service when I left that place in May last. The barracks are very old and decayed, and might be easily fired by an enemy with shells or rockets. The foundation was laid for a new set of barracks last winter, but the work was suspended for want of funds, by order of Genl. Flournoy.

<sup>2</sup> Sixty or seventy miles below New Orleans.

The Battery at English Turn<sup>3</sup> was calculated for nine pieces of Ordnance, there are no platforms for mounting Cannon, and neither Magazine nor barracks.

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3 About eighteen miles below the city.

Fort St. Charles, in this City, is very much out of repair; the platforms very rotten, and the parapets and glacis has been long going to decay. It answers for preserving a small powder Magazine, the Laboratory and deposit of fixed ammunition, contains barracks for a Company of Artillery which is stationed in it, and where the Artificers in the employ of the Deputy Commissary of Ordnance are quartered. It serves as a rallying point in case of insurrection, but being almost in the centre of the City, and surrounded by houses, could have but little effect in preventing the enemy from taking possession of the City. In repairing this work much expence would be incurred, and it could be of little service even in the best order.

The principal powder Magazine is on the opposite side of the river, guarded by a Detachment of the 44th Infantry under Col. Ross. It contains a very large deposit of powder, belonging to the Army, Navy, and Citizens.

Fort St. John about six miles from this place, is situated at the mouth of a large Bayou on Lake Ponchartrain, it is a small work of brick, very much out of repair, the pickets in the rear have almost all fallen down: This Battery was intended for nine pieces, but only four nine pounders are now mounted. There is a detachment of one Subaltern and twenty men of the 7th Infantry stationed there.

Enclosed you will receive a Copy of a letter, addressed to the Quarter Master Genl. on the subject of horses, for the Field Arty. He has purchased six, which increases our number to twenty two. He will go on to purchase whenever he meets with any that will answer for the service. You will receive herewith a Morning Report of the Artillery in Fort St. Charles, and of the Infantry in Barracks, by which you will observe, that there is fifty four men absent from the two Companies of the 7th the most of them with the Regiment at Tchifonta.<sup>2</sup>

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2 Tchifonte was on Lake Pontchartrain. The following letter from Capt. E. J. Humphrey to Capt. Thomas L. Butler, aide to Jackson, New Orleans, Sept. 6, 1814, shows that at this time Jackson did not think New Orleans in danger: "I have to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 30th ultimo directing me to forward to Head Quarters five hundred stands of Arms together with their Accoutrements. I am sorry it is not in my power to comply with this requisition not having the Arms, or Cartridge Boxes on hand, that are fit for service, and no Cartridge Box Belts. The Arms etc. required by your letter of the 28th of Augt. are sent by this opportunity, their condition is not such as I could wish; they however are the best we have. At the time I took charge of the store these Arms were packed up in Boxes and I supposed in good order; but on examining find the most of them want cleaning. my armorers have been constantly employed in cleaning and repairing Arms, but we have so few, (workmen) that we have not been able to complete many more than sufficient to meet the small returns that from time to time are sent in for Arms."

With great respect I am Sir